

acid.
144
men, Peace Soc



The Interparliamentary Union and its Work.

BY JAMES L. TRYON.

The Interparliamentary Union, of which so much is heard nowadays in connection with the movement for world-peace, is an association of members and ex-members of the various Parliaments of the world for the promotion of arbitration and better relations among the nations generally. It began nearly twenty years ago in the special interest taken in the subject by William Randall Cremer, a member of the British House of Commons. At first working quietly and patiently at home, he was instrumental in 1887 in causing a memorial to be presented by members of the British Parliament to the President and Congress of the United States in support of arbitration. This was followed by a similar memorial from France expressing the wish that a treaty of arbitration might be signed between that country and ours. In 1888 Mr. Cremer arranged a joint meeting in Paris of a few members of the Parliaments of England and France. This meeting occupied itself for the most part with a discussion of arbitration between France, Great Britain and the United States. As a result of this conference, the association now known as the Interparliamentary Union was formed in Paris in 1889. It began with a bureau of which Frederic Passy, the celebrated French internationalist and peace worker, was made president. Later on, when the organization took a more permanent shape, it formed a central council, which meets

for business when the main body is not in session. It has established an executive bureau at Brussels, of which Charles L. Lange of Christiania has been made secretary. With one or two exceptions annual conferences of the Union have been held, usually in some Old-World capital.

The Association, which has grown very rapidly, now numbers about two thousand five hundred members, and includes some of the leading public men of the day. The members of the different Parliaments represented in it are organized into national groups with their own officers. The American group, organized only five years ago, has about two hundred members. Its president is Hon. Richard Bartholdt of St. Louis, Mo.

The significance of this organization lies in the fact that it is composed of members of the Parliaments, and that they view problems in government from an international standpoint. Scientists, educators and postal officials had held universal congresses to consider matters of common interest among the nations. Government executives and diplomatists of necessity take an international point of view of things. But until this Union came into existence it was the custom of legislators, except as they passed upon the merits of a treaty or some special subject of international relations, to confine themselves to interests within the geographical limits of their own country. This organization is also significant because the ideas of arbitration and peace, which in the pioneer days of the past were advocated chiefly by peace societies and humanitarians, are now being adopted by practical politicians and statesmen. It also means that the international attitude of a government is no longer to be left to rulers and their cabinets, but more and more to be the subject of legislative action and the theme of

popular discussion. At the outset the Union urged the importance of having the popular will in international relations expressed by the direct vote of the people.

The recommendations of the Union have more weight to-day than those of almost any other international body. They are quoted by peace advocates in their lectures, have been endorsed by universal peace congresses, and are incorporated into the resolutions of labor conventions. At its twelfth meeting, held in St. Louis in 1904, Hon. Francis B. Loomis, Assistant Secretary of State, said in his speech of welcome to its members: "You have aroused, directed and educated public sentiment in favor of arbitration throughout the civilized world."

From the preliminary conference in 1888 arbitration has been the main object of the Union. Resolutions passed by it in 1889 express its position as follows:

"The members of the Interparliamentary Conference again urgently recommend all civilized governments to conclude treaties by which, without injury to their independence, or allowing any interference in what concerns their home affairs, they would engage to submit to arbitration the settlement of all differences which might arise between them.

"In every case in which the circumstances shall appear favorable — which is so far as concerns the United States and France, the United States and Italy, the United States and Spain — the governments and the Parliaments are earnestly invited to neglect no efforts to arrive promptly at the conclusion of such treaties. The Conference is convinced that the example once set will be speedily imitated.

"While awaiting the conclusion of permanent treaties, embracing all cases, the Conference expresses the desire that a special arbitration clause may be inserted in all special commercial treaties, literary conventions and others for their interpretation and execution."

Since these resolutions were passed about one hundred special treaties of arbitration for a limited number of years have been made between pairs of nations, and now it is proposed that there shall be a general treaty of arbitration, signed by all or a large number of them, whenever it shall be possible to bring about an international agreement in this matter.

The fifth conference of the Union, which was held at The Hague in 1894, adopted a resolution appointing six of its members a committee to prepare a plan for a permanent court of arbitration. This committee made a report the following year at Brussels in which it set forth in fourteen articles a working plan of such a court. Mr. Loomis referred to it in the following language: "The Interparliamentary Union deserves credit for practically forecasting five years in advance what proved to be the most salient work of the Peace Conference at The Hague." He also spoke of the fact that several members of the Union were delegates to the Hague Conference and exerted a powerful influence upon its proceedings. The Czar himself, in an authorized interview with Mr. William T. Stead, acknowledged that the idea of calling the first Conference was suggested to him by the work of the Union.

The United States for nearly a century, through the agitation of its peace societies and some of its most progressive statesmen, had been eminent among the nations for its preference for arbitration to war in the settlement of international controversies. It had made a notable record at the time of the Geneva Award, in the case of the Alabama Claims, and had shown its natural tendency in calling together the first Pan-American Conference. But owing to the distance to be traveled to get to

Europe, it had not been regularly represented in the Union. In 1896, therefore, the Union passed a resolution of appreciation of our work in its cause and our Congress was invited to be represented in its meetings. Hon. Samuel J. Barrows met with the Union the year following, and in 1899 was joined by Hon. Richard Bartholdt. Both men were chosen members of the central council. They were influential in having an invitation extended to the Union to hold its twelfth conference at St. Louis, on the occasion of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Our government, at an expense of \$50,000, entertained the delegates who attended this convention and gave them and their companions an excursion to places of historic interest in various parts of the country, including Mount Vernon and Washington. It was during this visit that President Roosevelt at the request of the Union promised to call the second Hague Conference. "The Tour of the Interparliamentary Union" is the title of a splendidly illustrated souvenir book, which was prepared by Mr. Barrows and published by our government in 1905. In this book is a chapter on the history and purpose of the Union from which this sketch is in part taken.

Since internationalism has come to be one of the most important interests of the day, the project of a world-congress of the nations, proposed more than half a century ago by Elihu Burritt, has been more and more prominently brought forward by the friends of peace. The Interparliamentary Union in advocating periodic meetings of the Hague Conference has practically endorsed the idea of such a congress. In 1906 the suggestion was made by Mr. Bartholdt that perhaps at first delegates from the Union might act as the lower house or popular branch, and the delegates to the

Hague Conference, who are appointed by the government executives, might serve as the upper house of the world-congress.

In connection with periodic meetings of the Hague Conference, the Union desires to have provision made for a permanent consultative council, to be charged with the codification and development of international law.

At conferences held some years ago it discussed the matter of protection to be given to foreign residents and non-combatants during hostilities. It has always stood for the inviolability of private property at sea in time of war. It strongly urged the consideration of the limitation of armaments by the second Hague Conference.

Preventive measures and methods of conciliation have at times been brought forward in its proceedings. A resolution passed in 1889 made it the duty of one of its committees "to unite all its efforts for dissipating the misunderstandings which might arise (in the interval before its next meeting) by making, if need be, an appeal to public opinion." At the meeting of the Union, which was held in the Westminster Chamber, London, July, 1906, at the suggestion of Hon. William J. Bryan, who made a notable speech on the subject, it passed a resolution providing that in case of controversies not usually included in treaties of arbitration, meaning matters affecting vital interests or national honor, demand shall be made by one or both opponents for an investigation of the contested issues by an international commission of inquiry, or for mediation by one or more friendly powers, before having recourse to measures of hostility.

The following is the full text of four resolutions, sometimes called "the four demands," which were passed at

the conference of the Union held in London from July 22 to 25, 1906 :

"1. That it would be advantageous to give the Hague Conference a more permanent influence in the work of pacification, and that the powers should agree in establishing periodical meetings of these Conferences.

"That the powers, when appointing their representatives to the second Hague Conference, could usefully include in their instructions the duty of endeavoring to find the means of constituting a permanent consultative council, entrusted with preparing the codification and development of international law.

"2. If a difference should arise between the contracting parties which, by the terms of the Convention, should not be submitted to arbitration, the parties shall not have recourse to measures of hostility of whatever nature before having jointly or separately demanded, according to the circumstances of the case, either the constitution of an international commission of inquiry or the mediation of one or more friendly powers.

"This requisition shall be made in case of need, conformably to Article VIII. of the Hague Convention for the peaceful settlement of international conflicts.

"3. The Interparliamentary Conference, considering that the increase of naval and military expenditure, which weighs so heavily upon the world, is universally recognized as intolerable, expresses emphatically the wish that the question of the limitation of armaments should form part of the program of the next Hague Conference.

"The Conference decides that each group of the Interparliamentary Union shall without delay bring this resolution before the government of its own country, and that it shall bring the utmost possible pressure to bear upon its own Parliament, so that the question of the limitation of armaments shall be made the subject of the national study necessary to secure the success of the international discussion.

"4. Considering that the duty of promoting international brotherhood, and of combating, directly or indirectly, the causes which lead to war, should be

undertaken by the executive governments with the whole authority and resources of the nations, this Conference recommends that to enable this duty to be effectively discharged there should be voted every year an appropriation bearing a definite proportion to the moneys voted for the army and the navy, which should be used as a budget for the promotion of internationalism and of peace."

The fifteenth Conference of the Union, held in Berlin in September, 1908, was attended by nine hundred members and ex-members of the Parliaments of twenty-one countries, the largest number ever present at one of its meetings. The Conference was cordially welcomed by Chancellor Von Buelow, and received a telegram of sympathy from Emperor William of Germany.

Resolutions were passed that a general arbitration treaty, if adopted, should stipulate that the sovereignty of every nation shall be guaranteed; that the American plan for a general treaty of obligatory arbitration be recommended as a basis for the negotiation of future treaties; that the nations which voted for this plan at the second Hague Conference be asked to give their votes effect by making treaties; that the dissentient states be invited to follow their example; and that treaties of arbitration, following the precedents of the Paris treaty of March 30, 1856, and the Olney-Pauncefote agreement of 1897, should provide that, in case of international conflict, the settlement of which is outside the scope of existing treaties, states shall postpone hostilities until they have solicited the mediation of one or more friendly powers.

Permanent committees from the different delegations were appointed to consider questions to be discussed at the third Hague Conference.

American Peace Society,

31 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

March, 1910.